BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC STATS Infoline

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October 29, 1999

highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

Population Growth in the Regions

- **Squamish-Lillooet continues to be the fastest-growing regional district in the province.** Its population was estimated at 35,911 on July 1, up 1.8% from a year earlier. East Kootenay (+1.7%, to 61,163) had the second fastest population growth, while Nanaimo (+1.0%, to 133,404) was ranked third. Also in the top five were Columbia-Shuswap (+0.9%) and Greater Vancouver (+0.9%), where the population was estimated at just under 2 million (1,990,961) on July 1st. Sunshine Coast (+0.9%), Central Okanagan (+0.8%) and Fraser Valley (+0.8%) were the only other regions where population growth exceeded the provincial average (+0.7%).

  For the second straight year, the Capital region's population was virtually unchanged. It declined marginally (-0.1%), falling to 334,368. The Capital region was one of eight regional districts that lost people during the twelve-month period ending July 1st. Mount Waddington's population shrank the most (-0.6%).

  Two villages saw their population expand at double-digit rates in 1999. Pemberton (+22.6%, to 1,659) led the way, followed by Masset (+13.4%, to 1,211). *Source: BC STATS*

The Economy

- **Shipments of goods manufactured in British Columbia edged up 0.5% (seasonally adjusted) between July and August, after rising 3.5% in the previous month.** A 2.5% increase in the non-durable goods sector was the main reason for the shipment growth. Paper (+3.6%) and food (+2.9%) shipments were higher than in July. However, wood manufacturers saw shipments fall (-3.8%) for the first time since February. Total durable goods shipments were down 1.0%.

  Canadian shipments rose 3.5% in August, led by a 4.6% gain in Ontario, where manufacturers put in their strongest performance since the same month of 1998. Shipments increased in every province except Newfoundland (-14.7%).

  Source: Statistics Canada

- **Exports of BC products declined 0.4% *(seasonally adjusted)* between July and August.** This marked the third straight month in which exports have changed modestly (they were up 0.4% (revised) in each of the two previous months). Exports to the US fell 1.2%, but shipments to other countries were up 1.6%.

  Forest product exports edged down 0.5% in August after expanding 7.1% in the previous month. August's drop was the third in the last four months. International shipments of mineral products remained weak (-11.5%), offsetting gains made earlier in the summer. *Source: BC STATS*

- **Two-thirds of BC's exports are destined for the US market, crossing the border by road, rail, sea, air, pipeline or powerline.** Just over half (52%) of the province's exports to the US last year were transported by truck. This compares to 43% at the beginning of the decade. The increased reliance on road transport reflects the continuing diversification of BC's export mix away from bulk resource commodities, usually shipped by rail or sea. In 1990, half of BC's US-bound exports went by rail (37%) or sea (14%). Last year, just over a third of the goods crossing the border into the States were transported in this way: 29% by rail and 7% by sea.

  Source: BC STATS

- **The number of regular employment insurance (EI) recipients in BC remained virtually**

Report **Major Public Projects in British Columbia**

Did you know...

There were 2,348 cannabis cultivation offenses reported in BC last year, a 250% increase from 1989, when there were 671 offenses. Nineteen percent of the 12,400 cannabis-related offences reported in BC last year were related to the cultivation of marijuana. That compares to 7% in 1989.

unchanged at 60,790 (seasonally adjusted) in August. This was the first time since March that the number of recipients in the province has not declined. Nationwide, the number of recipients rose (+2.5%) for the first time in half a year

Source: Statistics Canada

Small Businesses

- **There were 363,000 small businesses (those with fewer than 50 employees, or self-employed people working without paid help) in the province in 1998.** Sixty percent of these businesses were self-employed people working without paid help, while 40% were other firms. It is estimated that small businesses generate just over a third (36%) of the province's GDP, more than in any other province. About 28% of Canada's GDP is generated by small businesses.

Source: BC STATS

Marriages

- **There were 21,845 marriages performed in BC during 1997, 4.3% less than in the previous year, when 22,834 marriages were solemnized.** Nationwide, 153,306 couples tied the knot in 1997, down from 156,691 in 1996. Every region except Newfoundland (+1.0%), Saskatchewan (+0.6%) and NWT (+1.9%) saw the number of ceremonies performed fall between 1996 and 1997. *Source: SC, The Daily*
- **Three out of four (76%) Canadian couples who were married in 1997 chose to have a religious ceremony but in BC, less than half (44%) of all marriages were conducted by members of the clergy.** Yukon (29%) was the only region where religious ceremonies were less common. On the other end of the spectrum, nearly all (94%) of the weddings in Ontario were performed by clergy, and percentages in Atlantic Canada ranged from 80% to 86%. Spouses marrying for the first time were most likely (82%) to choose a religious service. It was a less common choice (58%) when the bride and groom had previously been divorced. Three quarters of the brides, and the same percentage of grooms, were entering their first marriage. August was the most popular time for weddings, with a fifth of the marriages taking place in that month.

Source: SC, The Daily

Crime

- **Last year, 486,800 crimes were reported to the police in BC, giving the province a crime rate of 121 per 100,000 population, down from 127 in 1997.** The crime rate has been falling since 1991, when it reached a high of 152. Property crimes were the most common offenses (72 per 100,000 people). The violent crime rate was 13, and the rate for other crimes was 36.

  Police solved (cleared) 30% of all reported criminal code offences in 1998, 16% by laying charges and 14%, by other means. Violent crimes were the ones most likely (68%) to be cleared. Only 17% of property crimes and 42% of other crimes were solved.

  There were 287,700 property crimes reported to the police in 1998. Most (60%) of these were thefts, followed by break and enter (23%), and motor vehicle theft (10%). Other property crimes include fraud (5%) and possession of stolen goods (2%). More than half of all thefts in 1998 were from vehicles. Other thefts (30%), shoplifting (12%) and bicycle (5%) thefts were less common.

Source: Police & Crime Summary Statistics, 1989-1998, Ministry of Attorney General

Tourism

- **Hotel occupancy rates in the province were virtually the same this August (79.6%) as a year earlier (79.8%).** Rates moved up slightly in the Greater Vancouver area (to 84.7%), but edged down in most other parts of the province. They dropped to 83.8% on Vancouver Island, and to 65.9% in Whistler. The average in the rest of BC was 71.8%. The Canadian average was 80.9%. Occupancy rates are a function of both the demand for rooms and the available supply. In BC, the opening of new properties and expansion of existing hotels, especially in the Whistler area, has increased the supply of rooms available.

Source: Pannell Kerr Forester, Trends in the Canadian Hotel Industry

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For data originating from Statistics Canada: data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the publication name or catalogue number.

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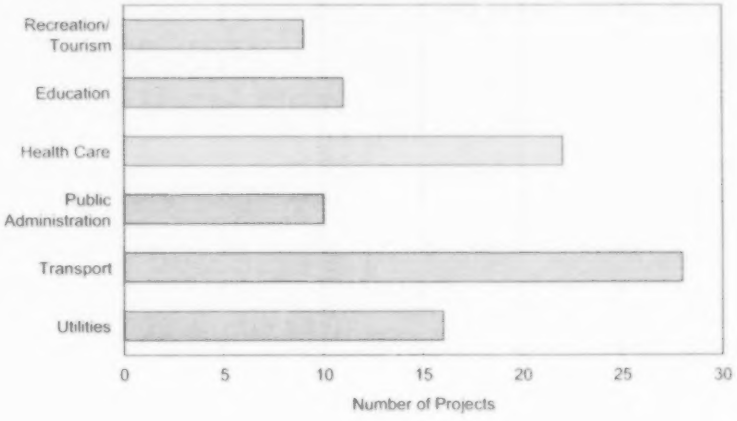
Infoline Report:

Major Public Projects in British Columbia

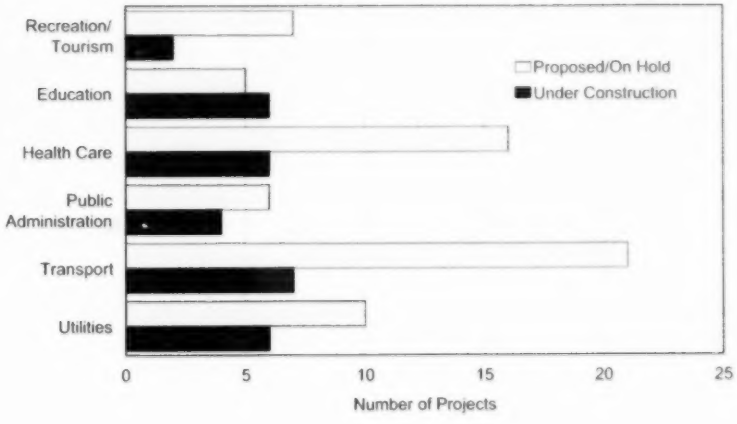
Contact: Jackie Hamilton / (250) 598-9080

Originally published in September 1999 (Issue 99-03), *BC Major Projects Inventory*.
Annual subscription: Paper: $70 + GST; Internet subscription: $100 + GST

The Major Projects Inventory lists 96 publicly funded projects that are proposed, on hold, or under construction in the province. Public projects include those that are funded by any level of government in whole, or in partnership with private ventures. Figure 1 indicates the number of public projects in several major sectors: recreation/tourism (including sports arenas, downtown redevelopments and convention centres), education, health care, public administration (corrections, defence, government), transportation, and utilities.



Transportation and health care facilities have the largest number of proposals, while educational facilities are the only types of public projects where construction starts exceed proposed projects (Figure 2). Thirty-one major projects are under construction, while the remaining 64 projects await approvals, funding or other resourcing.



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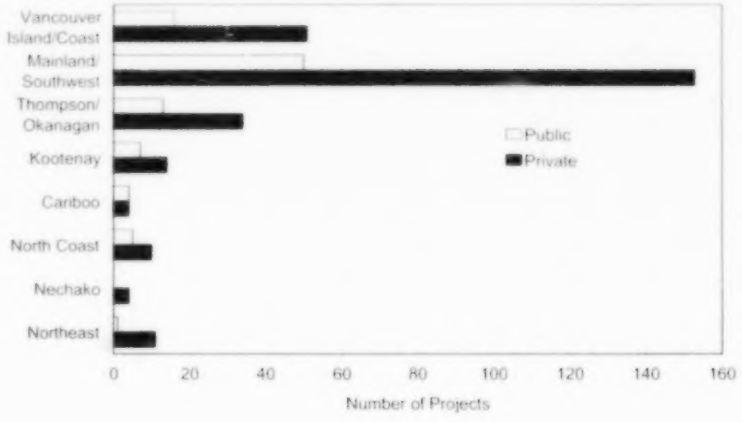
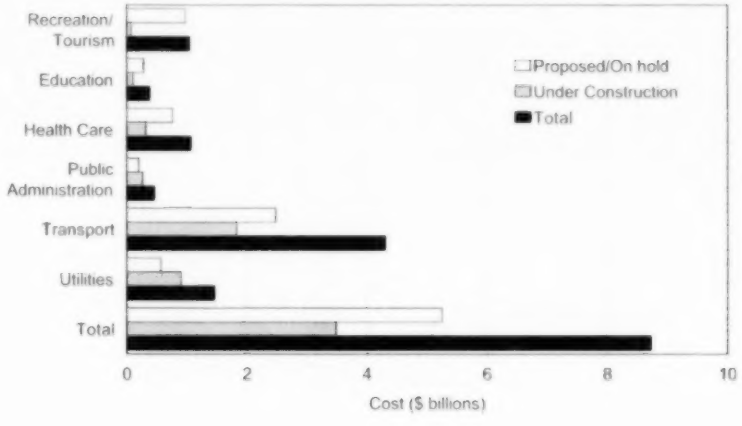
The regional distribution of public projects, relative to private-only projects is as shown in Figure 3. As expected, private projects far outstrip public projects in the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island Regions, by roughly two-thirds, but generally, in less populated regions, there is a lower public/private ratio than average.



The estimated capital cost of all public projects in BC is approximately $8.5 billion. Figure 4 provides an estimate of total capital costs for proposed and started projects by project type. Approximately $3.5 billion is committed in active construction, the top five projects amounting to $2.5 billion (Island Highway, Fast Ferries, Burrard Thermal, Keenleyside Hydroelectric, and Royal Jubilee Hospital). Waiting for approvals for funding or other forms of finalization are $5.2 billion worth of public projects, mostly in the transportation and utilities (e.g., water and sewage treatment, electricity) sector. The top five projects in the proposal stage (for which we have reliable cost estimates) are: Skytrain, Vancouver Trade and Convention Centre, Highway 1 (Trans-Canada) Upgrade, Technical University of BC, and Vancouver Island Natural Gas Pipeline II, totalling $2.7 billion in capital cost.



The Major Projects Inventory will feature more excerpts from the database in future issues.

Jackie Hamilton
Jackie Hamilton & Associates

Note: The views espressed in this article are those of the author, and should not be construed as having any link to the position of any B.C. government agency or person.

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Infoline

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fax transmission information service from **BC STATS**

also on the Internet at http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca

BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Jul 1/99	% change on one year ago
BC	4,029.3	0.7
Canada	30,568.0	0.9
GDP and INCOME		
(BC - at market prices)	1997	% change on one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *($ millions)*	109,347	3.3
GDP *($ 1992 millions)*	98,201	2.2
GDP *($ 1992 per Capita)*	24,775	0.1
Personal Disposable Income *($ 1992 per Capita)*	16,340	-2.3
TRADE ($ millions)		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) Aug	3,123	10.8
Merchandise Exports (raw) Aug	2,454	4.7
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Aug	2,788	1.9
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		
(all items - 1992=100)	Sep '99	% change on one year ago
BC	112.2	2.0
Canada	111.4	2.6
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		
(seasonally adjusted)	Sep '99	% change on one year ago
Labour Force - BC	2,064	0.9
Employed - BC	1,899	1.2
Unemployed - BC	165	-1.9
		Sep '98
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	8.0	8.2
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	7.5	8.3
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Oct 27/99	Oct 28/98
Prime Business Rate	6.25	7.00
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	7.35	6.50
- 5 year	8.25	6.75
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Oct 27/99	Oct 28/98
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $	1.4709	1.5421
US $ *(reciprocal of the closing rate)*	0.6795	0.6500
AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE		
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Sep '99	% change on one year ago
BC	629.51	0.2
Canada	603.16	2.9

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Wage Rate } Statistics Canada

Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bank-banque-canada.ca/english/wfsgen.htm

BC Population Still Growing in 1999

Estimates of population as of July 1, 1999 for British Columbia and its regional districts and municipalities were released this week.

Despite showing a significant outflow of population between 1998 and 1999, British Columbia recorded the third fastest rate of growth (0.7%) among the provinces after Alberta and Ontario.

The Lower Mainland's population grew only slightly faster than the province overall while the Victoria area registered a very small decline.

The area around Whistler led population growth, with Whistler itself doubling in size since 1991. Although Whistler's rate of growth slowed somewhat, nearby communities benefited from the spillover of Whistler's saturation. Tofino, on Vancouver Island, also saw strong growth as this area diversifies its economic base away from resource industries.

For details see our web site: http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca and click on the link.

Released this week by BC STATS

- Exports, September 1999
- Business Indicators, October 1999
- Current Statistics, October 1999

Next week

- Tourism Room Revenue, July 1999

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